

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 02086 091641Z

61

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 ACDA-19 SAM-01 SCCT-02

SAB-01 EUR-25 NEAE-00 DRC-01 /135 W

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O R 091536Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2113

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2086

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJ: STATUS REPORT ON GOVERNMENT CRISIS

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

REF: TEL AVIV 2049

1. ISRAELI GOVERNMENT CRISIS IS PRESENTLY IN CLASSICAL INTERIM STAGE OF STALEMATE, WITH INTRA-PARTY NEGOTIATIONS DEADLOCKED. AT ISSUE NOW IS WHETHER SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO ALL CONCERNED CAN BE FOUND WHICH WOULD REMOVE DAYAN FROM DEFENSE MINISTRY WITHOUT PRECIPITATING RESIGNATION OF ENTIRE GOVERNMENT.

2. MRS MEIR HAS INDICATED THAT HER PREFERRED SOLUTION WOULD BE FOR NO ONE TO RESIGN AND FOR HER TO CARRY OUT A SIMPLE RESHUFFLE OF MINISTRIES IN WHICH DAYAN WOULD RECEIVE ANOTHER PORTFOLIO. THERE IS GROWING CONCERN AMONG HER LABOR PARTY COLLEAGUES THAT IF GOVERNMENT FALLS MRS MEIR WOULD REFUSE TO HEAD NEW GOVERNMENT--WITH OR WITHOUT RECOURSE TO NEW ELECTION MRS MEIR HAS DENIED NEW REPORTS THAT SHE HAS ALREADY THREATENED TO RESIGN.

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 02086 091641Z

AWARENESS THAT CRISIS COULD FORCE PARTY TO FACE SUCCESSION

STRUGGLE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, RAISING NEW FOCUS OF INTRA-PARTY CONTENTION, CLEARLY IS MAJOR FACTOR IN EFFORTS TO HOLD GOVERNMENT TOGETHER.

3. MAPAI FACTION OF LABOR PARTY (SAPIR, ZADOK, RABINOWITZ, ET AL) APRIL 8 PROPOSED, AS A FRESH COMPROMISE, THAT ALL LABOR ALIGNMENT MINISTERS WHO WERE SERVING IN CABINET AT OUTSET OF OCTOBER WAR SHOULD RESIGN WITH EXCEPTION OF MRS MEIR, WHO WOULD THEN FORM ANOTHER GOVERNMENT IN WHICH DAYAN WOULD BE GIVEN NEW PORTFOLIO. THIS PROPOSAL APPARENTLY IS DESIGNED TO FORESTALL EITHER ONE OF TWO DEVELOPMENTS: (A) NEW DRAWN-OUT AND DIFFICULT COALITION NEGOTIATIONS IN WAKE OF GOVERNMENT'S RESIGNATION OR (B) CONVERSION OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT INTO A CARETAKER ONE PENDING OUTCOME OF NEW ELECTION, IN WHICH CASE DAYAN WOULD REMAIN IN CHARGE OF DEFENSE MINISTRY FOR AT LEAST SEVERAL MORE MONTHS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT MRS MEIR IS OPPOSED TO THIS PROPOSAL, WHICH WOULD EXCLUDE HER FROM APPLICATION OF COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY PRINCIPLE.

4. DAYAN'S RAFI FACTION CONTINUES TO STICK BY ITS POSITION THAT LABOR LEADERSHIP HAS ONLY TWO CHOICES: (A) NO ONE RESIGNS AND DAYAN REMAINS WHERE HE IS OR (B) ENTIRE GOVERNMENT RESIGNS REGARDLESS OF CONSEQUENCES. IN EITHER CASE RAFI IS DETERMINED TO PREVENT ANTI-DAYAN FORCES FROM USING AGRANAT REPORT AS INSTRUMENT TO DUMP DAYAN.

5. SENIOR LEADERSHIP OF LABOR ALIGNMENT'S COALITION PARTNERS, NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY (NRP) AND INDEPENDENT LIBERAL PARTY (ILP) ADHERE TO POSITION THAT CRISIS SHOULD BE RESOLVED WITHOUT RESIGNATION OF ENTIRE GOVERNMENT. WITHIN BOTH PARTIES, HOWEVER, THERE IS MINORITY VIEW AMONG KNESSET DELEGATIONS THAT NO SOLUTION SHORT OF GOVERNMENT'S RESIGNATION CAN OVERCOME CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE. CURRENT CRISIS IN EFFECT HAS ALSO PRECIPITATED FRESH EFFORTS WITHIN THESE PARTIES TO FORCE A "CHANGING OF THE GUARD," PARALLELING SITUATION WITHIN LABOR PARTY.

6. ISRAEL RADIO AND AFTERNOON PRESS REPORT THAT POLITICIANS ARE DISCUSSING VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES FOR SUCCESSOR TO DAYAN
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PAGE 03 TEL AV 02086 091641Z

AT DEFENSE MINISTRY, INCLUDING SAPIR, RABIN, PERES
AND BAR-LEV.

7. FIVE-HOUR CABINET MEETING CONCLUDED WITHOUT ANY BREAK-THROUGH. GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THAT MINISTERS DISCUSSED AGRANAT REPORT FOR LESS THAN AN HOUR, WITH BULK OF MEETING DEDICATED TO SECURITY SITUATION. MRS MEIR WILL MEET WITH SENIOR LABOR PARTY LEADERSHIP THIS EVENING AND ADDITIONAL

CABINET SESSION HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 11. ON PAST
RECORD, WE CANNOT RULE OUT THAT KNESSET DEBATE WILL BE POST-
PONED FOR SEVERAL DAYS.
KEATING

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